

CHAPTER VII.

THE COMMERCE-DESTROYERS.

THE Confederate naval authorities early recognized that the most vulnerable point of their enemy, as a maritime power, lay in his merchant marine. In 1861 the United States still occupied the second place among commercial nations. Of the total registered tonnage, however, less than one-tenth belonged to the seceding States ; and this rapidly disappeared. In a warfare against commerce, the Confederates could strike heavy blows, without fear of being struck in return. Accordingly, it was against commerce that they immediately took the offensive ; and they maintained their position until the end of the war—after the end, in fact. The Federal Government, on the other hand, could not make use of commerce-destroyers, because there was no enemy's commerce to destroy. It follows that the history of the ocean warfare during the conflict falls naturally into a recital of the doings of Southern cruisers.

The policy of systematic operations against the merchant fleet of the United States was adopted at the outset. As early as April 17, 1861, Davis published his famous proclamation, announcing his purpose of issuing letters-of-marque. At this time, the practice of privateering had been somewhat discredited by the general concurrence of European States in the Declaration of the Congress of Paris. But the Southern leaders counted upon a support abroad



RAPHAEL SEMMES

that would not be weakened by the influence of sentimental considerations; and as the United States had not subscribed the Declaration, neither party was bound by its articles. When the circular invitation of the Powers was sent to this Government in 1856, Secretary Marcy proposed to amend the rules by the addition of a new article, exempting private property at sea from capture. No action was taken on the proposal, and the negotiations were suspended until President Lincoln's accession to office. About a week after Davis's proclamation was issued, the Department of State instructed the Minister of the United States at London to reopen negotiations, and offered to accede unconditionally to the Declaration. This proposal seemed to point too strongly to an effort to clothe Southern privateering with an illegal character, and the British Government refused to make an agreement which should be applicable to the existing war. As the United States were thus debarred from any present advantage to be derived from the adoption of the rule, the whole question was dropped.

A volunteer navy may in some degree supply the place of privateers, supposing that plenty of time and an elastic organization are at command, with a flourishing merchant marine upon which to draw; but at the South, in 1861, there was no merchant marine. Still less was there time or organization. In fact, the scheme of a volunteer navy was tried by the Confederate Government later in the war, and proved a signal failure. Accordingly, the naval administration of the Confederacy was wise in turning over its work to private parties, and thus saving its own energies. The ocean was covered with an unsuspecting and unprotected commerce, which lay at the mercy of any one whose hostile intentions were backed by a single gun. Few and indifferent as were the vessels available for privateering, a score of

prizes had been brought into New Orleans by the end of May, six weeks after the issue of the proclamation.

It was necessary to decide at the outset in what light the acts of the Southern privateers should be regarded. Though the Confederate Government was recognized by the courts as belligerent, and a state of war was held to exist, the legal authority of the United States over its subjects could not come to an end, even while these subjects were enemies. According to the strict legal view, neither the fact of a civil war, nor its express recognition, involved any abrogation of the powers of the Government over its subjects in revolt. The Constitution defines treason to be the levying of war against the United States and giving aid and comfort to the enemies thereof; and it was competent for the State to bring to trial for treason those whose acts came within the constitutional definition. But the insurrection assumed such large proportions in the beginning, and was directed by such complete governmental machinery, that every consideration of policy and necessity, as well as of humanity and morality, prescribed a course of action under which the insurgents should be treated as belligerents, and, when captured, as prisoners of war.

An attempt was made to put those engaged in hostilities at sea upon a different footing, and to bring them to trial for piracy. The proclamation of April 19 gave expression to this principle. In it the President said:

“And I hereby proclaim and declare that if any person under the pretended authority of the said States, or under any other pretence, shall molest a vessel of the United States, or the persons or cargo on board of her, such person will be held amenable to the laws of the United States for the prevention and punishment of piracy.”

The policy of the Government, as set forth in the procla-

mation, was never carried out, because it was found to be impracticable. Certain of the crews of the captured privateers were tried, and as their acts fell specifically under the provisions of the law defining piracy, conviction was in some cases obtained ; but the Confederate authorities threatened retaliation, and they were in a position to carry out their threat. The Government therefore went no further with its prosecutions. Nor is it clear, if they had continued, upon what ground they could have been justified. The fact that the war was a civil war afforded no reason for a distinction between combatants at sea and combatants on land. As naval warfare is no more criminal than land warfare, those captured in the one occupation are as much entitled to be treated as prisoners of war as those captured in the other. The only explanation of the prosecution of the "Savannah pirates," as the reports designate them, is the fact that the Government, having taken a definite position in the proclamation of April 19, before the magnitude of the insurrection was fully realized, was unwilling to recede until the courts had sustained its action.

During the first year of the war the privateers met with moderate success. A considerable number of small vessels were fitted out, old slavers, tugs, fishing-schooners, revenue cutters, and small coasters of all descriptions. Many of them would lie securely in the inlets on the coast of the Carolinas, and issue forth when they sighted a stray merchantman off the coast, returning to cover when they had made their capture. Others went to work more boldly, but nearly all had a short career. The brig Jeff Davis, a condemned slaver, after cruising off the New England coast and making several valuable prizes, was wrecked on the coast of Florida. The Beauregard, a Charleston schooner, was captured by the U. S. bark W. G. Anderson. The schooner Judah was

burnt at her wharf, at the Pensacola Navy Yard, by a party of officers and men from the flagship Colorado. The Savannah, a Charleston pilot-boat of fifty-four tons, was captured when three days out by the brig Perry, one of the blockading force, and was carried into New York, where the trial of her crew for piracy led to the threat of retaliation upon prisoners in Southern hands. The Petrel, which had formerly been a revenue cutter, was sunk by a shell from the frigate St. Lawrence, cruising off Charleston.¹

In spite of the successes of the sailing-vessels of the navy against the early privateers, it took some time to drive off or capture all these mosquitoes of ocean warfare. In fact, the practice of privateering may be said to have died out rather than to have been broken up. The blockade was indirectly instrumental in killing it. Its principal object was gain, but there was little to be gained when prizes could not be sent into port. The occupation of commerce-destroying pure and simple, however useful and patriotic, is not lucrative; and it was therefore left to the Confederate naval officers, who took it as a part of their duties. The privateers hitherto employed in it were soon diverted to the more profitable pursuit of carrying contraband. The work which they had abandoned was then taken in hand by the Confederate Government, and it was carried on by the navy during the rest of the war with results that exceeded the most sanguine expectations.

The first, or nearly the first, of the regularly commissioned naval vessels, as distinguished from the privateers, was the Sumter. Indeed, she was one of the first vessels of any kind

¹ The story has been so often repeated that the St. Lawrence was disguised as a merchantman, and that the Petrel attempted to capture her that, although a matter of no special importance, it may be worth while to state that it has no foundation in fact. The Petrel endeavored to escape from the St. Lawrence, but the latter chased and overhauled her.

fitted out for hostile purposes at the South, as Semmes was ordered to command her on the 18th of April, 1861. She was a screw-steamer of five hundred tons, and was lying at New Orleans, being one of a line of steamers plying regularly between that port and Havana. The frame of the vessel was strengthened, a berth-deck was put in, the spar-deck cabins were removed, and room was found for a magazine and additional coal-bunkers. She was armed with an VIII-inch pivot-gun between the fore and main masts, and four 24-pound howitzers in broadside.

Semmes had hoped to get his vessel out before the blockade began; but on the 26th of May the Brooklyn appeared off the mouth of the river, where she was soon after joined by the Powhatan. Later, the Massachusetts and South Carolina were added to the squadron, and both the passes were closed.

The Sumter was not ready for sea until the 18th of June. At this date, she dropped down the river to the forts, and thence to the Head of the Passes, where she remained at anchor for nearly a fortnight, watching for an opportunity to run out. Here Semmes had every advantage, as he could obtain accurate information of the movements of the blockading vessels, while they were ignorant of his presence. The Brooklyn had made an effort to ascend the river, but after grounding once or twice gave up the attempt. If the vessels could have taken a position at the Head of the Passes, they might have guarded securely all the outlets, instead of keeping up an imperfect blockade while lying off the bar at the different mouths. Twice a report that one or another of the blockaders had left her station led Semmes to run down one of the Passes; but each time he failed to escape. The second time he remained in Pass-à-Loutre, a few miles from the bar, unobserved by the Brooklyn; and after a few hours

of waiting, at a moment when the latter had left her anchorage in chase of a sail, he made for the mouth of the Pass. The Brooklyn, upon sighting him, left her chase, and attempted to head him off; but he reached the bar and got out to sea. The Brooklyn followed, and carrying sail and steam, was still gaining on him; but by hauling up a couple of points, Semmes brought the wind so far ahead that his pursuer took in her sails, and she gradually dropped astern, having lost the opportunity of destroying, at a single blow, nearly the whole sea-going navy of the Confederacy.

When only three days out, the Sumter made her first prize, the bark Golden Rocket, which was burnt. By the 6th of July, or in less than a week after running the blockade, she had captured seven other merchantmen. One of these was ordered to New Orleans with a prize-crew, and was recaptured. The remaining six were taken in to Cienfuegos, where they were afterward released by the Spanish authorities. During the next two months, the Sumter cruised in the Caribbean Sea, and along the coast of South America. She received friendly treatment in the neutral ports which she visited, and was allowed to stay as long as she liked. She coaled without hindrance at Curaçao, Trinidad, Paramaribo, and Maranham. Only at Puerto Cabello, in Venezuela, was she required to depart after forty-eight hours. There was no concealment about her character or her movements; but none of the vessels that were sent in pursuit of her were able to find her. Among these were the Niagara and the Powhatan, from the Gulf Squadron, and the Keystone State, Richmond, Iroquois, and San Jacinto.

After leaving Maranham, Semmes shaped his course for the calm-belt. Here he expected to overhaul many merchantmen; but he only captured two, both of which he burnt. Neither was an important capture, except that from

one of them the Sumter was enabled to replenish her stock of fresh provisions.

After two months of cruising in the Atlantic, the Sumter put in to St. Pierre, in the island of Martinique, for coal and water. She had been here only five days when the Iroquois came in, a very fast sloop-of-war, under Captain Palmer. The usual warnings in regard to the neutrality of the port were administered by the French authorities, and the American sloop, after reconnoitering the Sumter closely, came to anchor. Finding that the rule forbidding either vessel to leave port within twenty-four hours of the other would be rigidly enforced, Palmer lost no time in getting under way again, to take a position outside. The coast at St. Pierre forms an open roadstead, twelve miles wide; and here Palmer waited, standing off and on, as near as he could venture without laying himself open to the charge of hovering within neutral waters. So matters remained for a week.

On the night of the 23d of November, when the Sumter had finished all her preparations, she weighed anchor and stood out. Arrangements had been made for signalling her movements from one of the American schooners in port; and Semmes, with his quick perception and ready resource, took advantage of the fact to throw his enemy off the scent. Heading for the southern point of the roads, he held his course until he was sure that the Iroquois was following the signal lights; then doubling suddenly, he returned under cover of the land, and stopping from time to time, he succeeded in giving Palmer the slip. A fortunate rain-squall concealed his movements, and in half an hour he was running under a full head of steam for the northern end of the island, while the Iroquois was chasing furiously to the southward. In a little while she discovered the ruse, and retraced her course; but the Sumter was not to be seen,

and Palmer, despairing of finding her, made his way to St. Thomas.

The Sumter now cruised to the eastward with moderate success. Three prizes were taken and burnt. Bad weather came on, and after a time it became necessary to make a port and refit. Cadiz was selected, and thither the ship proceeded, arriving early in January. The Spaniards showed no disposition to have her remain long, and after being docked and repaired she sailed for Gibraltar. On the way she made two prizes, one of which was burnt, and the other, having a neutral cargo, was ransomed.

The career of the Sumter now came to an end. She had no coal, and neither the government nor the private dealers would furnish a supply. The vessel herself was hardly in a condition to go to sea, and the question of transferring her officers to a new ship had been considered, when the Tuscarora arrived at Gibraltar. Taking her station at Algeciras, on the Spanish coast, the Tuscarora set on foot an effectual blockade of the Confederate cruiser. Later the Kearsarge and the Ino arrived. In view of serious defects in the boilers, and of the other unfavorable circumstances, the Sumter was condemned by a survey, and afterward sold. She became subsequently a blockade-runner. During her cruise she had made seventeen prizes, of which two were ransomed, seven were released in Cuban ports by order of the Captain-General, and two were recaptured. Apart from the delays caused by interrupted voyages, the total injury inflicted by the Sumter upon American commerce consisted in the burning of six vessels with their cargoes.

One of the half-dozen vessels which had been sent in search of the Sumter was the screw-sloop San Jacinto, commanded by Captain Charles Wilkes. Early in November, 1861, the San Jacinto was at Havana. The Confederate

commissioners, Mason and Slidell, had shortly before arrived at that place, having been brought to Cardenas by the famous blockade-runner *Theodora*. They were to take passage for St. Thomas in the British mail-steamer *Trent*, a vessel belonging to a regular line of steamers between Vera Cruz and St. Thomas. Wilkes left Havana on the 2d, having formed the intention of intercepting the steamer and seizing the commissioners.

The *Trent* sailed on the 7th, and on the next day she was brought to in the Bahama Channel by the *San Jacinto*. A shot was fired across her bow, and as she continued on her course it was followed by a shell. When the *Trent* stopped, Lieutenant Fairfax was sent on board, with orders to bring off the commissioners and their secretaries. As they refused to come except under constraint, another boat was sent to the steamer in charge of Lieutenant Greer, with a party of marines, and the four passengers were removed. The difficult task of carrying out his instructions was performed by Lieutenant Fairfax with discretion and forbearance, though there was much to have provoked a man of less coolness and self-command. The mail-agent on board the *Trent*, a retired Commander of the British Navy, was noisy in his demonstrations, and the bearing of the people on board was offensive and irritating. According to the joint statement made by the commissioners, "many of the passengers became highly excited, and gave vent to the strongest expressions of indignation, seeming to indicate a purpose of resistance on their part;" and a slight movement was made by the guard of marines, which checked the disturbance. The affair was conducted with as much good order and propriety as such a proceeding would admit.

The prisoners were taken to Fort Warren, but were subsequently given up to the British Government. The Navy De-

partment, somewhat prematurely, gave Captain Wilkes an emphatic commendation. But the Secretary of State, who was more fully acquainted with the current of opinion in England, and who saw the slender barrier that stood in the way of war, avoided committing himself. He wrote to Mr. Adams that the act had been performed without instructions from the government, and that nothing had been done on the subject to anticipate discussion. This immediate disavowal of the act, made under no demand or pressure, enabled the government, when it was called upon to take a definite position, to yield becomingly to Earl Russell's request that the prisoners should be released.

Indeed, there was nothing else to be done. After the first burst of satisfaction was over, the more Wilkes's act was looked at in the light of sober reason, the less could it be justified. It consisted in the removal of four persons from a neutral vessel making a voyage between neutral ports, because they occupied an official station under the Confederate Government. Such an act has no foundation in international law or usage. The United States, in particular, have always maintained the opposite principle, and in 1812 they had even gone to war to maintain it, as against the English doctrine of the right of impressment. This fact was turned to account by Seward in the elaborate review of the case presented by him to the British Government, after the latter had demanded the release of the commissioners; and it was shown that Great Britain, by condemning the act of Wilkes, had for the first time acknowledged the illegality of her ancient practice.

The question whether the vessel herself was or was not liable to capture is one to which international law does not make a definite answer. The rule, roughly stated, which has the general support of text-writers, declares that neutral

vessels employed in transporting persons or despatches of the enemy, in connection with the operations of war, are liable to capture and condemnation. But the rule is subject to many important limitations, and as far as precedent is concerned, it rests exclusively upon ten cases, decided in the English Admiralty Court between 1802 and 1810, in seven of which the vessels were condemned. The judgments of Lord Stowell in these cases may be said to have created the rule. None of them covered exactly the case of the *Trent*, though in one or two there were enough points of resemblance to make the question a fair subject of consideration by a prize-court. But the question could only be brought before a court by capturing the vessel and sending her in for adjudication.

Wilkes probably had some such idea in his mind, for he excused his release of the *Trent* by referring to his want of force, and to the inconvenience that would be caused by the detention of the passengers and mails. The first reason was under the circumstances hardly applicable. The second, commendable as was its motive, could not justify Wilkes in allowing the *Trent* to proceed, if the rule applied to her, and if there was a reasonable suspicion of her guilt. If there was no such suspicion, his only course, according to every principle and precedent, was to release her as he found her, with all her cargo and occupants intact. The course which he adopted, though it seemed from his point of view to be a middle course, and therefore the safest, was really no middle course at all. It was a proceeding of a totally different character from either of the others. Its clear illegality was due to the principle, of which Wilkes lost sight for the moment, that the captor of a neutral vessel has no right to concern himself as to the persons who may be therein, except so far as their presence may afford a ground for the

capture ; and that the only question for him to decide is whether the vessel can be charged with any illegal act, and, according to the decision, to release her or make her a prize.

The action taken by the British Government, upon receiving news of the event, was summary in the extreme. It was no new thing for the naval officers of a belligerent to commit an error by which a temporary injury resulted to a neutral. The usual course under such circumstances is for the injured party to make proper representations, assuming that the act was the error of a subordinate ; upon which a disavowal is made, and in cases demanding it an apology and reparation, and with this the affair ends. All this was done in the case of the Trent ; and though the representations of the British Government were made in suitable form, and some discretion was left with Lord Lyons as to his action, yet the two despatches sent by Earl Russell on the 30th of November were in reality not the opening of a negotiation, but an ultimatum. At the same time, every preparation for war was set on foot ; vessels were fitted out, and troops were ordered to Canada ; and the whole community, aroused by these measures, thought itself already on the verge of hostilities. Mr. Seward's despatch, written on the same day with Earl Russell's ultimatum, and communicated to the latter by Mr. Adams, gave ample assurance that the injury, such as it was, proceeded from the mistake of an individual. But this fact was concealed, after the despatch had been received, and the preparations were continued. Of course the moral effect of these preparations was to arouse a sympathy for the Southern cause throughout the length and breadth of England ; and without further comment on the position of the English Government, it is enough to say that had it been influenced at this time by unfriendly motives, it could hardly have adopted a more unfriendly course of action.

Long before the cruise of the Sumter was over, the Confederate Government saw that it would be unable to build suitable cruising ships-of-war at home, and took steps to procure them abroad. Under the rules of international law, however, ships-of-war are or ought to be difficult things for a belligerent to obtain from a neutral. They stand on a footing by themselves, quite different from that of other contraband articles. For supplies of ordinary contraband, furnished by its subjects, a neutral State is not responsible, and the subjects who carry on such a trade do it at their own risk, and are not interfered with by their government. But the construction of a belligerent vessel fitted for purposes of war falls outside the class of acts which foreign subjects may perform consistently with the neutrality of their governments; and according to the rule embodied in the Treaty of Washington, though not acknowledged by Great Britain to have been in force during the Civil War, "a neutral government is bound to use due diligence to prevent the fitting out, arming, or equipping within its jurisdiction of any vessel which it has reasonable ground to believe is intended to cruise or carry on war against a power with which it is at peace; and also to use like diligence to prevent the departure from its jurisdiction of any vessel intended to cruise or to carry on war as above, such vessel having been specially adapted, in whole or in part, within such jurisdiction, to warlike use."

Whether this rule was a part of international law in 1861 or not, a rule somewhat approaching it was generally accepted, and found expression in the neutrality laws of different States. The British statute then in force imposed a penalty for the "equipping, furnishing, fitting out, or arming" of a vessel with the intent that the vessel should cruise or commit hostilities against a friendly State. The British

Government held that this act defined the extent of its neutral obligations ; and the Confederate agents were therefore safe if they could evade its specific provisions. This was accomplished successfully by causing ships to be built and sent out completely prepared for warlike operations, except that they lacked their battery, ammunition, and full crew. All that was needed to supply these defects was then sent in another vessel to an appointed rendezvous outside of British jurisdiction. When the two vessels met, the guns and other equipments were transferred, and the cruiser became a Confederate ship-of-war on the spot.

In order to carry out this plan of operations, it was necessary for the Confederacy to have its regularly authorized agents abroad. Besides the commissioners, whose mission was primarily diplomatic, there was, first of all, Captain James D. Bullock, an officer of the Confederate Navy, who acted for the Navy Department, and whose name appears to have been used when it was necessary for the Government to be represented by an accredited agent, as in the sale of the Georgia. Next in importance came the Liverpool firm of Fraser, Trenholm & Co., a branch of the Charleston house of John Fraser & Co., the head of which, Trenholm, was for some time the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury. The Liverpool house was the authorized depositary of Confederate funds in Europe, and it conducted, on the other side, the blockade-running and other enterprises in which the Government at Richmond took a large part. There were other agents, with greater or less responsibilities at various points, North and Huse in England, Barron, whom Semmes designates "our Chief of Bureau in Paris," Helm in Cuba, Heyliger at Nassau, and Walker at Bermuda. These, or most of these, acted directly for the Government, and their authority was generally understood and recognized. Be-

sides these, there were others, foreign subjects, sometimes merchants in good standing, who were ready to act when a third person was required to carry out a fictitious transfer, or to perform some part in a transaction which was too delicate for the principals. Sometimes two or three intermediaries would be employed, each of whom, whatever his suspicions might be, could swear that he was ignorant of any purpose in contravention of neutrality; and the different steps in the transaction were adroitly involved and confused until it became impossible to obtain sufficient evidence to secure the conviction of any of the guilty parties, on a charge of violation of the neutrality laws.

The Florida was the first of the commerce-destroyers of English origin. She was built at Liverpool in the fall and winter of 1861-62, and ingenious measures were taken to conceal her ownership and destination. It was given out that she was building for the Italian Government, her ostensible owner being a merchant of Liverpool and Palermo. The Italian Consul, however, disclaimed all knowledge of her, and her pretended destination deceived no one but the English authorities. Representations made to the Foreign Office by the United States Minister were of no effect, and on the 22d of March, 1862, the Florida cleared from Liverpool under the name of the Oreto, and without a cargo, for Palermo and Jamaica. About the same time, the guns and ammunition for the new cruiser were shipped in the steamer Bahama from Hartlepool for Nassau.

The Oreto or Florida arrived at Nassau on the 28th of April. She was consigned to Adderly & Co. This firm was the Nassau correspondent of Fraser, Trenholm & Co., of Liverpool, who were notoriously the financial agents of the Confederate Government in England. Adderly & Co. delivered the vessel to Maffitt, an officer of the Confederate

Navy, who was subsequently placed in command; and other officers were sent over to join her. She was removed to Cochrane's Anchorage, nine miles from Nassau, and began to take on board her arms and ammunition; but this proceeding was presently discontinued, as it would leave no loophole for the authorities to ignore the character of the vessel. During this time, and later, she was inspected officially by English naval officers, who reported that she was "in every respect fitted as a man-of-war, on the principle of the despatch gun-vessels in Her Majesty's service." She was deserted by most of her crew, because they were unwilling to engage in hostilities, and a new crew was shipped at Nassau.

In view of these facts the *Oreto* was libelled in the Vice-Admiralty Court. The trial did not reflect credit upon the character of judicial proceedings in the British colonies. The vessel was released on the 7th of August, and sailed on the same day, under the command of Maffitt, for Green Cay, an uninhabited island in the Bahamas. Here she took on board her battery, consisting of two VII-inch rifles, and six VI-inch guns, with carriages and ammunition, and forthwith proceeded on her cruise, under the Confederate flag. Maffitt had only been able to obtain a crew of twenty-two men; and he had no sooner got to sea than the yellow fever appeared on board. To add to his difficulties, he found that in the hurry of departure from Nassau, some of the most essential equipments of the battery had been left behind, and he was without rammers, sponges, sights, locks, elevating-screws, and other indispensable articles. With great reluctance, he gave up for the time his intended cruise, and steered for the coast of Cuba. Avoiding the cruisers, he arrived at Cardenas, his effective crew reduced by sickness to only three men. Here he was attacked by the fever, but recovered after a critical illness. The authorities of Cuba observed their neu-

tral obligations, and, though Stribling, the first lieutenant of the *Florida*, succeeded in getting on board a dozen men under the name of laborers, nothing could be done to make up the deficiencies of the battery.

After a week in Cardenas, Maffitt, still prostrated by disease, took the *Florida* to Havana. Nothing could be obtained here, and he resolved, as the only course open to him, to make at once for Mobile. Proceeding directly from Havana, the *Florida* sighted Fort Morgan and the blockading squadron on the 4th of September. In view of the helpless condition of the ship, and the crippled state of her crew and battery, Stribling was in favor of a cautious line of action, and advised delaying the attempt, at least until night. But Maffitt had studied the chances, and he decided that the boldest course was the safest.

How the *Florida* succeeded in her daring attempt, and how, after four months of rest in Mobile, she ran the blockade outward on the night of January 16, 1863, has been already told. In the course of ten days after leaving Mobile she captured three small vessels, which she burned, after the example set by the *Sumter*. According to Maffitt, his "instructions were brief and to the point, leaving much to the discretion, but more to the torch." On January 26, the *Florida* put into Nassau, where her appearance as a ship-of-war must have caused some confusion to the merchant who had sworn at the trial in July that he considered her as a merchant-vessel, and then had delivered her to Maffitt. She was received, however, with an ovation, allowed to remain thirty-six hours, when the instructions of the Government limited the time to twenty-four, and took on board coal for three months, though the authorities had been directed to limit coal-supplies to a quantity sufficient to enable the belligerent cruiser to reach the nearest port of her

own country. A month later she received one hundred tons of coal at Barbadoes, in further violation of the instructions, which forbade a second supply within three months.

The important part of the Florida's cruise began with her departure from Barbadoes. In the space of five months, fourteen prizes were taken and destroyed, in accordance with the orders of the Confederate Government. The cruise extended from the latitude of New York to the southward of Bahia. The neighborhood of the island of Fernando de Noronha was found to be a fruitful cruising-ground. One of the vessels captured here, the Lapwing, was laden with two hundred and sixty tons of coal, and Maffitt, by converting her into a tender, was enabled to supply the wants of his ship without going into port.

On the 6th of May, the Florida captured the brig Clarence, off the coast of Brazil. After putting some light guns on board, and a few men, Maffitt entrusted the command of the Clarence, now a ship-of-war, to Lieutenant Read of the Florida, an officer whose daring and readiness of resource were worthy of Semmes himself. Read proceeded northward on a roving cruise, along the coast of the United States, and during the month of June he made lively work of it between the Chesapeake and Portland. By the 10th he had captured five vessels. Four of these were destroyed. The fifth was the schooner Tacony, and finding her better suited to his purpose, Read burned the Clarence, after transferring his guns and crew to the new cruiser. In the next fortnight, the Tacony made ten prizes. The last of these, the Archer, then became a ship-of-war, and the Tacony shared the fate of the Clarence. The Archer's career was short. Two days after she was put in commission, Read ran into Portland with a party of his men in boats, and surprised and cut out the revenue-cutter Caleb Cushing, which was

lying in the harbor. Next morning, however, he was attacked by steamers which had been hastily manned and sent out from Portland. As he could not make a successful resistance, Read set the cutter on fire, and put off in his boats to the Archer; but he was pursued and captured, and was shortly after a prisoner in Fort Warren.

After refitting and coaling at Bermuda in July, the Florida sailed for Brest. Here she remained nearly six months, and was docked and thoroughly repaired. Maffitt was relieved by Captain Barney, who in turn gave place to Captain Morris. The Florida sailed from Brest in February, and after cruising for four months, put in again to Bermuda. Here she repaired, and took on board eighty tons of coal, by permission. Further supplies were taken without permission, the authorities not bestirring themselves very vigorously to enforce the regulations, and accepting Morris's statement that Mobile was the first Confederate port he expected to visit. He did not visit Mobile, whatever may have been his expectations, but made a second raid of three months on the merchant vessels of the United States, this time on their own coast. Crossing the Atlantic, he was at Teneriffe early in August; and returning, he arrived on the 5th of October at Bahia.

The United States sloop-of-war Wachusett, Commander Napoleon Collins, was lying at this time in Bahia. The Florida came in and anchored near the shore, about half a mile from the Wachusett's berth. Immediately after her arrival, a Brazilian corvette, in apprehension of a disturbance, took a position between the two vessels and near the Florida.

The Florida had received permission to remain in port for forty-eight hours, and Collins made up his mind to destroy or capture her before the time arrived for her departure. Accordingly, before daybreak on the morning of the 7th, he

got under way, and crossed the bow of the Brazilian. It was his intention to run the Florida down, and sink her at her anchor; but the plan was imperfectly carried out, and the Wachusett's bow, striking the enemy on the starboard quarter, cut down her bulwarks and carried away her mizzenmast and main-yard, but did not disable her. A few pistol shots were fired from the Florida, as the Wachusett backed off, which were returned with a volley of small arms, and with a discharge from two of the broadside guns. The Florida then surrendered.

At the time of the capture, Captain Morris was on shore, together with a number of the officers and crew. Lieutenant Porter, who had been left in command, came on board the Wachusett with sixty-nine officers and men. A hawser was carried to the Florida, and she was towed out of the harbor. The Wachusett had three men slightly wounded,—the only casualties in the engagement.

In the protest subsequently made by the Brazilian Government, it was stated that upon the discharge of the Wachusett's guns an officer was sent from the Brazilian corvette to inform Collins that the forts and vessels would open fire upon him, if he persisted in attacking the Florida. At this time the capture had been already made. The officer of the deck on board the Wachusett, according to the Brazilian account, promised to desist. This statement was denied by the American officers. The fact that the conversation, whatever it may have been, was carried on in English and Portuguese, would probably be sufficient to account for a misunderstanding. The corvette's boat then returned, and the Brazilian captain fired a gun, "to ratify his intimation," as he expressed it; and all was quiet again. As the Wachusett steamed out of the harbor with her prize, the Brazilian made a *pro forma* demonstration, without stopping

the two vessels, and the latter proceeded by way of St. Thomas to Hampton Roads. Here the Florida was sunk, according to the official declaration of the United States Government, through "an unforeseen accident," after a collision with an army transport.

The capture of the Florida was as gross and deliberate a violation of the rights of neutrals as was ever committed in any age or country. It is idle to attempt to apologize for it or to explain it; the circumstances were such that the question does not admit of discussion. All that can be said is that it was the independent act of an officer, and that it was disavowed by the Government. In the words of the Secretary of State, it "was an unauthorized, unlawful, and indefensible exercise of the naval force of the United States within a foreign country, in defiance of its established and duly recognized Government." That the action of Collins met with approval and satisfaction throughout the country, in spite of the official utterances, is not to be wondered at, considering that communities in general know little of international law, and in a case of this kind do not stop to reason about principles. Moreover, the slight regard which, during nearly four years, neutrals had shown for their obligations toward the United States, and the use of their own territories which they had permitted to the Southern cruisers, had aroused in this country a just indignation and a deep-seated sense of wrong and outrage. Collins refers to the previous conduct of Brazil by way of justification. He says in his report: "I thought it probable the Brazilian authorities would forbear to interfere, as they had done at Fernando de Noronha, when the rebel steamer Alabama was permitted to take into the anchorage three American ships, and to take coal from the Cora [Louisa] Hatch within musket-shot of the fort; and afterward, within easy range of their guns, to set on fire

those unarmed vessels. I regret, however, to state that they fired three shotted guns at us, while we were towing the Florida out."

The imputation of blame cast by Collins's "regret" upon the Brazilian authorities was unnecessary. What the Brazilian vessels should have done was to engage the Wachusett, and prevent the capture. What they attempted to do, apparently, was to pursue such a course of action and inaction combined as would enable their Government to avoid a difficulty with either belligerent. That they did not propose to engage the Wachusett is tolerably clear; but at the same time they did enough to make a diplomatic defence, in case the Confederacy should ever be in a position to settle accounts with their Government.

The second cruiser built in England for the Confederates was the Alabama, whose career began in July, 1862. The attention of the Foreign Office had been first called to this vessel by a note from Mr. Adams on the 23d of June. The evidence then submitted as to her character was confined to a statement made by the Consul at Liverpool, of suspicious circumstances connected with the vessel. The communication was referred to the law officers of the Crown, who gave the opinion that, if the allegations were true, the building and equipment of the vessel were a "manifest violation of the Foreign Enlistment Act, and steps ought to be taken to put that act in force and to prevent the vessel from going to sea." It was added that the Customs authorities at Liverpool should endeavor to ascertain the truth of the statements, and that, if sufficient evidence could be obtained, proceedings should be taken as early as possible. On the 4th of July, the report of the Customs officers was transmitted to Mr. Adams, tending to show that there

was no sufficient evidence that a violation of the Act was contemplated.

Other correspondence and opinions followed. On the 21st, affidavits were delivered to the authorities at Liverpool, one of which, made by a seaman who had been shipped on board the vessel, declared that Butcher, the captain of the *Alabama*, who engaged him, had stated that she was going out to fight for the Confederate States. Other depositions to the same effect were received on the 23d and 25th, all of which were referred, as they came in, to the law officers. The latter rendered the opinion that the evidence of the deponents, coupled with the character of the vessel, made it reasonably clear that she was intended for warlike use against the United States; and recommended that she be seized without loss of time.

Notwithstanding that the urgency of the case was well known to the Government, and notwithstanding also that, of the four depositions upon which the law officers chiefly based their opinion, one had been received on the 21st of July, two others on the 23d, and the fourth on the 25th, the report was not presented until the 29th. On that day, however, the *Alabama* left Liverpool, without an armament, and ostensibly on a trial trip. She ran down to Point Lynas, on the coast of Anglesea, about fifty miles from Liverpool. Here she remained for two days, completing her preparations. On the morning of the 31st, she got under way and stood to the northward up the Irish Sea; and, rounding the northern coast of Ireland, she passed out into the Atlantic.

Among the innumerable side-issues presented by the case of the *Alabama*, the facts given above contain the essential point. That the attention of the British Government was called to the suspicious character of the vessel on the 23d of

June; that her adaptation to warlike use was admitted; that her readiness for sea was known; that evidence was submitted on the 21st, the 23d, and finally on the 25th of July that put her character beyond a doubt; and that in spite of all this, she was allowed to sail on the 29th, make the real foundation of the case against Great Britain.

The *Alabama* arrived at Port Praya, in the Azores, on the 10th of August. Here she was joined on the 18th by the bark *Agrippina* of London, bringing her battery, ammunition, stores, and coal; and two days later the steamer *Bahama* came in from Liverpool, with Semmes and the remainder of the officers and crew. After a week spent at Angra Bay, preparing for the cruise, Semmes left his anchorage on the 24th of August; and, going a few miles off the coast to be outside of neutral jurisdiction, he complied with the formalities of putting his ship in commission. His crew had been shipped at Point Lynas for a fictitious voyage. Of these, eighty were now re-shipped; and the remainder were obtained from the men that had come out in the *Bahama*. Nearly all belonged to Liverpool. Those who were unwilling to go returned to England in the other vessel; and the *Alabama* started on her cruise.

The first two months were spent in the North Atlantic. In this time twenty prizes were taken and burnt. In one or two cases, there were at least doubts as to the hostile ownership of the cargo; but the prize-court of the Confederacy now sat in Semmes's cabin, and all questions of law and fact were settled by the captain's decision. The interested neutral in these cases was Great Britain, and Semmes had doubtless satisfied himself beforehand as to how far he could safely go. There was no probability that the British Government, after making so little effort to prevent his departure, would quarrel with him about the destruction of

a cargo of her subjects' merchandise. That Semmes was not mistaken in his conjecture, is proved by the letter in reference to this point, addressed by direction of Earl Russell to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. The letter says: "British property on board a vessel belonging to one of the belligerents must be subject to all the risks and contingencies of war, so far as the capture of the vessel is concerned. The owners of any British property, not being contraband of war, on board a Federal vessel captured and destroyed by a Confederate vessel of war, may claim in a Confederate prize-court compensation for the destruction of such property."

However one may wish to avoid reviving an old grievance, which is now happily a grievance of the past, it is impossible to avoid comparing the extreme complaisance of the Foreign Office toward the acts of Semmes—acts for which a neutral ordinarily demands instant reparation—and its summary action in the case of the Trent, when the property of its subjects had been in no way injured. In one case it excused not only the officer, but the Government under which he was acting; and its suggestion of a remedy for the owners, in view of the character of prize proceedings in the Confederacy, was little less than a mockery. In the other case, it accompanied its diplomatic demands with hostile preparations, and it encouraged the manufacture of public sentiment in favor of war by withholding explanatory despatches. The inference is unavoidable that the Government deliberately intended to pursue a policy as unfriendly as it could possibly be without passing the technical bounds of a legal neutrality.

After cruising as far as the Banks, the Alabama turned her head southward. Her coal was nearly exhausted, and arrangements had been made before starting for receiving a

fresh supply, from vessels despatched for the purpose from England, which were to meet her at dates and places agreed upon. Arriving on the 18th of November at Fort de France, in the island of Martinique, Semmes found the *Agrippina* awaiting him ; but he postponed taking in his coal, and as a precaution, sent her to another rendezvous.

Already, in October, the *San Jacinto*, now commanded by Commander Ronckendorff, had been ordered to cruise in the West Indies, in search of the *Alabama*, and the latter had not been at Martinique a day before the sloop came in. She carried one XI-inch and ten IX-inch guns ; so that in armament the *Alabama* was not a match for her. As the Governor of Martinique proposed to enforce the "twenty-four hours" rule, the *San Jacinto* did not come to anchor, but went out to cruise beyond the marine league, waiting for the enemy to leave the harbor. She did not have long to wait. On the 20th, early in the evening, the *Alabama* put out. Signal was made from an American brig in the harbor, and Semmes was prepared for a critical moment. But the night was dark, and the *San Jacinto* was lying well out from the entrance ; and though she had two boats on the watch, the *Alabama* got out unobserved. As the *San Jacinto*, however, was deficient in speed, she would have had some difficulty in bringing on an engagement, even if she had met the enemy.

After coaling at Blanquilla from the *Agrippina*, Semmes shaped his course for the Mona Passage and thence for the Windward Passage. He remained cruising in and near the latter for five days. On the 7th of December, the *Ariel*, one of the mail-steamers for which he had been waiting, was captured, with a large number of passengers. These he proposed to land at Kingston, before burning the ship, but the prevalence of yellow fever prevented him from carrying out

the plan, and the steamer was released under heavy ransom-bonds.

After making some necessary repairs to her engine, the Alabama passed to the southward and westward, cruising in the Gulf of Honduras and off the coast of Yucatan. At the Arcas, a group of small islands in the Bay of Campechy, she met another coal-bark. She remained here at anchor for two weeks, coaling and refitting. Thence, on the 5th of January, 1863, Semmes proceeded to off the coast of Texas, having formed the bold design of intercepting a part of the transport fleet, which he supposed would at this time be on its way to Galveston.

The Alabama arrived off Galveston at noon on the 11th. It will be remembered that only ten days before her arrival the unfortunate affair had taken place at that port, which resulted in the loss of the Harriet Lane and Westfield, and the raising of the blockade by two Texan river-steamers. A squadron under Commodore Henry H. Bell, composed of the Brooklyn, the Hatteras, and three or four gunboats, had been hurriedly collected at New Orleans, to resume the blockade, and several of the vessels had arrived off Galveston shortly before the appearance of the Alabama. The latter was sighted from the masthead of the Brooklyn when about twelve miles off. She had no steam up, nor were any sails set that could be distinguished. The lookout from the masthead took her for a bark or a three-masted schooner. The Brooklyn's fires were out, and new grate-bars were being put in; otherwise she would have gone in pursuit of the stranger. As it was, the commodore signalled the Hatteras to chase, and the latter got under way, and steamed in the direction indicated.

In the number of men on board, the two ships were nearly equal; but the Hatteras was far from being a match for the

Alabama, either in her guns or in her construction. She was a mere shell; an iron side-wheeler, of eleven hundred tons, built for carrying passengers on the Delaware—an “excursion-boat,” in short. The armaments of the two vessels were as follows :

HATTERAS.

Number of Guns.	Weight of Projectiles.
4 short 32-pounders (27 cwt.)	128 lbs.
2 rifled 30-pounders.....	60 lbs.
1 rifled 20-pounder.....	20 lbs.
1 howitzer	12 lbs.
<hr/> Total, 8 guns.....	<hr/> 220 lbs.

ALABAMA.

Number of Guns.	Weight of Projectiles.
6 long 32-pounders (52 cwt.).....	192 lbs.
1 rifled 100-pounder (Blakeley).....	100 lbs.
1 VIII-inch shell gun.....	68 lbs.
<hr/> Total, 8 guns ¹	<hr/> 360 lbs.

The efficiency of the enemy's battery was quite double that of the Hatteras. Added to which, the engines and boilers of the Hatteras were exposed to every shot, while the Alabama's machinery was protected by coal-bunkers and by its position below the water-line. Moreover, the Hatteras had no speed; and the ease with which, toward the end of the chase, she overhauled the stranger, led her captain, Blake, to suspect that he was being played with, and that the intention was to draw him away from the squadron.

¹ Blake says in his report that there was also a rifled 24-pounder on board the Alabama, but as Semmes states that this was a 9-pounder, it is omitted in the statement.

If his suspicions were well founded, however, he had nothing to do but to keep on his course and fight, and he prepared for a vigorous attack. When he had left the flagship, between three and four in the afternoon, the chase was not in sight from the Hatteras; and it was only after he had proceeded some distance that he discovered her to be a bark-rigged steamer, standing on under topsails away from the bar, and occasionally steaming a little. The fact was immediately signalled to the flagship, but the signals were not observed.

At dusk the Alabama lay to, being then about twenty miles from the squadron, and waited for the Hatteras to come up. Blake had resolved to run up as close as possible, and if his surmises were correct, to endeavor to board. With the Alabama it was his only chance. As he approached he hailed, and the other vessel replied, giving as her name, "Her Majesty's ship Petrel." This gentle ruse lulled Blake's suspicions, and he gave orders to send a boat on board the stranger. The Alabama only waited for Blake's reply to her hail, to make sure of his nationality; and on receiving it, before the boat had gone more than its length from the ship, she discharged a broadside at the Hatteras.

During the hailing, Semmes had endeavored to get a raking position astern of the Hatteras, but the latter had thwarted the attempt. After the firing began, both vessels moved forward, the Hatteras trying to get on board; but the Alabama passed ahead, and Blake, though he came very near—being not more than thirty or forty yards off at one time—failed to accomplish his object. The firing was sharp on both sides; but out of fifty shots estimated by Blake to have been fired from his vessel, only seven hit the mark. One struck the Alabama under the counter, penetrating as far as a timber, and then glanced off; a second struck the

funnel; a third passed through both sides; a fourth entered the lamp room; and the others lodged in the bunkers. None of the shells exploded. The Alabama's fire, on the other hand, was most destructive. In the space of a few moments the Hatteras was riddled like a sieve. Shells were exploded in the hold and the sick bay, and set them on fire; another shell entered the cylinder; and presently the walking beam was shot away. Desperate as his position now was, Blake, with the tenacity that was characteristic of him, held out a few minutes longer, knowing that he was beaten, yet hoping that some chance might damage his enemy. But the Alabama, placing herself in an unassailable position on his bow, had him completely at her mercy, and continued to pour in a galling fire. Whole sheets of iron were torn off the side of the Hatteras, allowing a volume of water to enter; and with his ship on fire in two places, and sinking fast, and his engine and pumps disabled, Blake saw that a few moments of delay would only result in the sacrifice of all on board, and gave up the hopeless struggle.

The action had lasted thirteen minutes. At its close, the crew of the Hatteras were hastily removed, and ten minutes after they had left the ship she went down bow foremost. The Brooklyn, Sciota, and Cayuga, soon after the beginning of the fight, had got under way, and steered in the direction of the flashes; but they cruised all night without meeting anything, while the Alabama was steadily holding her course to Jamaica. On her way back to Galveston the next morning, the Brooklyn discovered the masts of a wreck, standing upright, with the tops awash; and only by a mark on the hurricane-deck, which was found adrift, was the wreck identified as that of the ill-fated Hatteras.

The Alabama now put in to Port Royal, Jamaica, where she landed her prisoners and repaired damages. The latter

were not serious, and the ship remained only five days in port. After burning two prizes, the crews of which were landed at San Domingo, Semmes shaped his course for a point on the great highway of South American commerce, near the equator. He remained in this neighborhood two months, and captured eight vessels. All of these were destroyed except one, the *Louisa Hatch*, which was loaded with coal. Proceeding to the Brazilian island of Fernando de Noronha, with the *Hatch* in company, he coaled in the harbor from his prize. He then took her out and burned her. While lying in the port two American ships arrived outside, and the *Alabama* was permitted, without any remonstrance from the authorities, to run out and destroy them, returning the same day to the harbor. These were the acts to which Collins afterward referred, in excusing his capture of the *Florida*. The Brazilian authorities clearly neglected their duty in allowing this violation of neutrality to pass without remonstrance or interference, but as far as the case of the *Florida* is concerned, one wrong cannot be said to justify another.

Semmes now cruised for two months—his usual time for remaining in one locality—on the coast of Brazil, stopping for a fortnight at Bahia. Ten prizes were added to his list in this period. One of these, the bark *Conrad*, was taken into the Confederate service as a tender, armed with two captured 12-pounders, and put in commission at sea under the name of the *Tuscaloosa*. About the first of July the two vessels proceeded to the Cape of Good Hope, where they arrived on the 29th. The *Alabama* remained in the neighborhood of the Cape until the 24th of September, occasionally putting in at Cape Town or at Simon's Bay.

A question arose at Cape Town in reference to the character of the *Tuscaloosa*. As prizes could not be brought by the cruisers of either belligerent into British ports, the

Tuscaloosa, if a prize, would be excluded. Semmes claimed for her all the privileges of a commissioned ship-of-war, and the civil authorities were inclined to side with him. Sir Baldwin Walker, however, the admiral commanding at the Cape, took an opposite view, and wrote to the governor that "to bring a captured vessel under the denomination of a vessel-of-war, she must be fitted for warlike purposes, and not merely have a few men and a few small guns put on board her (in fact, nothing but a prize-crew), in order to disguise her real character as a prize. Now, this vessel has her original cargo of wool still on board. . . . Viewing all the circumstances of the case, they afford room for the supposition that the vessel is styled a tender, with the object of avoiding the prohibition against her entrance as a prize into our ports, where, if the captors wished, arrangements could be made for the disposal of her valuable cargo."

The Admiral's straightforward opinion was overruled; but when the case was reported, the Tuscaloosa having then left Cape Town, the Home Government instructed the governor that the vessel was a prize, and should have been detained. These instructions were calculated to afford a cheap satisfaction to the United States, without injuring the Confederates. Unfortunately, the Tuscaloosa disturbed the calculation by again coming into port, after a cruise to Brazil, and the colonial governor proceeded to detain her, in accordance with the instructions of his superiors. This was not at all what the Home Government wanted; and it immediately disavowed the act, and ordered the restoration of the Tuscaloosa to Lieutenant Low, her commander, on the ground that "having been once allowed to enter and leave the port, he was fairly entitled to assume that he might do so a second time." Comment on these proceedings is hardly necessary.

Having made arrangements soon after his arrival at Cape

Town for the sale of the *Sea Bride*, his latest prize, and of the *Tuscaloosa's* cargo, Semmes retired with his vessels to *Angra Pequena*, a point on the west coast of Africa, outside of civilized jurisdiction, and made the transfers. The *Tuscaloosa* was then ordered to the coast of Brazil. After cruising for two weeks off the Cape, Semmes put into Simon's Bay. Here he learned that the *Vanderbilt*, under Commander Baldwin, was cruising in search of him, having left the Bay only five days before. Being satisfied that his pursuer would not return, he remained in port a week, making preparations for his projected cruise to the East Indies. During this stay in port, he shipped eleven men, to make up for losses by desertion.

It is not necessary to go into the details of this part of the cruise. It lasted six months, and resulted in the capture and destruction of seven vessels. First running due south until she struck the fortieth parallel, the *Alabama* then steered to the northward and eastward for the Straits of Sunda. She watched the Straits for a time, and next crossed the China Sea to Condore, an island off the coast of Cochin-China. Returning by way of Singapore, the Malabar coast, and Mozambique Channel, she found herself on the 20th of March again at the Cape. Thence she sailed on the 24th for Europe.

In consequence of the appearance of the *Alabama* and *Florida*, the Navy Department, in September, 1862, had set about making a systematic effort to put a stop to the depredations of the commerce-destroyers. A flying squadron was fitted out to cruise in the West Indies, and the command was given to Captain Charles Wilkes. In its instructions, dated September 8, 1862, the Department, after recounting the fitting-out of the *Alabama* and *Florida*, and the fact that they were cruising in the West Indies, went on to say:

“The Department has information that other vessels are destined for similar purposes in the same quarter, and it is therefore essential that prompt and vigorous measures be adopted for annihilating these lawless depredators by their capture, and, if necessary, destruction. You have been selected to command a squadron for this purpose. . . .”

The instructions designated the West Indies and Bahamas as the cruising ground, and named the sloops-of-war Wachusett and Dacotah, the double-enders Cimмерone, Sonoma, Tioga, and Octorara, and the fast side-wheel steamer Santiago de Cuba as the vessels that were to compose the squadron. Of these only the Wachusett and the Dacotah were fitted to cope singly with the Alabama; but other suitable vessels were subsequently added to the squadron.

Wilkes sailed from Hampton Roads in the Wachusett on the 24th of September. His cruise lasted about nine months. During two months of this time, the Alabama was in the same waters; while the Florida, when she left Mobile, ran directly into his cruising ground. But Wilkes was unable to find them; and the main purpose of his cruise, the capture of the commerce-destroyers, was never carried out.

First and last, Wilkes had sixteen vessels under his command. He made some captures of neutral vessels engaged in contraband trade, and he worried from time to time the English steamers in the West Indies, thereby causing unnecessary friction. He incurred the displeasure of the Department by several unwarranted acts, but particularly by the retention of vessels, as a part of his command, which belonged to other squadrons or had been ordered on special service. The Oneida and the Cuyler, which had been sent in pursuit of the Florida after her escape from Mobile, were among the vessels appropriated in this way; and Farragut was led to express himself strongly on the subject, and to

suggest that if any of Wilkes's ships came into his neighborhood, he should adopt a similar line of action. But the fatal mistake made by Wilkes was in detaining the Vanderbilt; and in consequence of this and other causes of dissatisfaction, he was relieved in June, 1863, by Commodore Lardner.

After the Alabama had reached the West Indies, in November, 1862, it was foreseen that she could not remain long in that quarter; and the Vanderbilt, one of the fastest steamers in the navy, was fitted out to cruise under Commander Baldwin, with a roving commission, in the direction it was supposed she would take. The orders of the Department to Baldwin, dated January 27, 1863, when the Alabama was on her way to her cruising ground near the equator, show with what remarkable foresight Semmes's movements were predicted, and his probable cruise mapped out.

The orders read: "You will first visit Havana, where you may obtain information to govern your further movements. You can then visit any of the islands of the West Indies, or any part of the Gulf, at which you think you would be most likely to overtake the Alabama, or procure information of her. When you are perfectly satisfied that the Alabama has left the Gulf or the West Indies, and gone to some other locality, you will proceed along the coast of Brazil to Fernando de Noronha, and Rio de Janeiro, making inquiry at such places as you may deem advisable. From Rio continue your course to the Cape of Good Hope, thence back to St. Helena, Cape de Verde, the Canaries, Madeira, Lisbon, Western Islands, and New York. If at any point word is obtained of the Alabama or any other rebel craft, you will pursue her without regard to these instructions."

This judicious plan was defeated by Wilkes. On the 28th of February, the Vanderbilt, after looking in at Martinique

and Guadeloupe, fell in with the Wachusett off St. Thomas. Wilkes thereupon left the Wachusett, and transferring his flag to the Vanderbilt, proceeded to Havana. He was much pleased with his new acquisition. On the 20th of March he wrote the Department: "I cannot well describe to you the efficiency of this steamer, and the excellent condition of discipline she is in, and the many advantages she offers for this particular cruising. Her speed is much beyond that of any other steamer I know of, and her armament is equal to anything she can possibly have to encounter."¹ Nothing would induce Wilkes to part with her, until the 13th of June, when, in obedience to peremptory orders from the Department, he allowed her to go on her cruise. She proceeded directly to the coast of Brazil. But it was now too late: the bird had flown. The Alabama had been at Fernando de Noronha on the 10th of April, and at Bahia on the 11th of May; and by the 1st of July she had left the South American coast altogether.

Touching at the Brazilian ports, Baldwin found himself everywhere upon the track of the enemy, but a month behind her. He followed her to the Cape of Good Hope, stopping on the way at St. Helena. At the Cape Semmes eluded him successfully; and the cruise of the Vanderbilt, from which so much had been expected, produced no substantial result.

At the very time that the Alabama left the Cape and disappeared in the Indian Ocean, the United States sloop-of-war Wyoming was cruising in the neighborhood of the Straits of Sunda, to protect the commerce passing over the great highway to the China Sea. Two days before the Alabama arrived in the Straits the Wyoming was lying at Batavia,

¹ The Vanderbilt carried two 100-pounder rifles and twelve IX-inch guns.

one hundred miles to the eastward. When the Wyoming put to sea, Semmes doubled on her, and himself ran down into the Java Sea north of Batavia. The Wyoming returned to Batavia, and Semmes made his way to the China Sea. During the first week in December, the sloop was at Singapore and Johore, while Semmes was refitting at Condore, to the northward. Late in the same month, Semmes, on his way home, put in to Singapore, and remained there four days. But by this time the Wyoming was off on a false chase to Manila, twelve hundred miles away to the northeast, and the opportunity of meeting the Alabama was gone forever.

The Alabama arrived at Cherbourg from the Cape of Good Hope on the 11th of June. Here Semmes proposed to have her docked and thoroughly repaired; but permission was delayed, and the vessel was still lying in the harbor when, on the 14th, the sloop-of-war Kearsarge, commanded by Captain John A. Winslow, steamed into Cherbourg. The Kearsarge was lying at Flushing when the news reached her of the Alabama's arrival; and she immediately proceeded to Cherbourg, in the hope of an engagement. After sending a boat ashore, she steamed out of the harbor without anchoring; and, taking her station outside, maintained a close watch for the enemy, in case he should attempt to escape.

But Semmes had no intention of running away. After warring so long on unarmed merchant-ships, he could not afford to decline the battle that was so pointedly offered him by a vessel with which he was nearly matched. His English friends, who had stood by him loyally hitherto, though he gave them much to carry, would have been compelled to disown him if he had shirked the encounter. He met the occasion squarely, and wrote a letter to a resident

of Cherbourg, by which the United States Consul was definitely informed of his intention to engage the Kearsarge.

For four days the Alabama was occupied with preparations for battle; and between nine and ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th, she came out of the harbor. The weather was fine, with a slight haze. It was Sunday, Semmes's "lucky day;" but for once his luck had deserted him. Perhaps he had some apprehensions of this kind, as he sent ashore all his valuables, including his captured chronometers, and his collection of ransom-bills, which were to be paid after the recognition of the Confederacy. The Kearsarge was lying three miles off the eastern entrance, as the Alabama came down to the west of the breakwater, escorted as far as the marine league by the Couronne, a French iron-clad which was to guard the neutrality of the territorial waters. Following the two vessels was an English yacht, the Deerhound. Semmes's purpose had been made public, and the shore was covered with throngs of people, wherever a spot could be found, to witness the fight.

As the Alabama came out, the Kearsarge steamed off shore, to be well outside the neutral limits, and to prevent Semmes from finding a refuge if the battle went against him. On reaching a point seven miles from the land, the Kearsarge, at 10.50, was turned short around, and steered for the enemy.

The armament of the two ships was as follows:

KEARSARGE.

Number of Guns.	Weight of Projectiles.
4 short 32-pounders.....	128 lbs.
2 XI-inch pivots (smooth-bore).....	272 lbs.
1 30-pounder (rifle).....	30 lbs.
<hr/> 7 guns.....	<hr/> 430 lbs.

ALABAMA.

Number of Guns.	Weight of Projectiles.
6 long 32-pounders (52 cwt.).....	192 lbs.
1 rifled 100-pounder (Blakeley)	100 lbs.
1 VIII-inch shell-gun.....	68 lbs.
—	—
8 guns.....	360 lbs.

In the matter of speed, that primary essential of a ship-of-war, the Kearsarge had somewhat the advantage. The difference in the number of men, 163 in the Kearsarge and 149 in the Alabama (including officers in both cases), was not material. Both ships had their batteries pivoted to starboard; and the Alabama fought seven guns on her engaged side, while the Kearsarge fought five. As to the size of the ships, the tonnage of the Kearsarge was 1,031, and that of the Alabama 1,016, by the old system of measurement. They were, therefore, in most respects closely matched; and in regard to the comparative strength of their armaments, it can only be said that each carried what was considered by those who fitted her out the most effective battery for a ship of that size.

As soon as the Kearsarge had turned to approach her, the Alabama opened fire, from a raking position, at a distance of a mile. This was at 10.57. The Kearsarge came on at full speed, receiving a second broadside, and part of a third. Coming within nine hundred yards, she sheered off and returned the enemy's fire with her starboard battery. At this point, she took the offensive and endeavored to pass astern of the Alabama and rake her; but the latter prevented the manœuvre by sheering, still keeping her starboard broadside to the sloop. These tactics were continued throughout

the action. Both vessels circled about a common centre, keeping broadside to broadside, and apparently heading in opposite directions, but in reality following each other on their circular course. In this way, they made seven complete revolutions, the Kearsarge under a full head of steam, always endeavoring to close and rake, and the Alabama edging around, and keeping only her broadside exposed.

The crew of the Alabama had had little practice in firing at a target, having been compelled to husband their ammunition, and the warfare in which they had been engaged for eighteen months not being of a kind that called for expertness in gunnery. Their firing at the beginning was rapid and wild, though it became steadier toward the close. The crew of the Kearsarge, on the other hand, under the thorough training of Thornton, her efficient executive, made excellent practice, firing with deliberateness and precision. They had been instructed to point the heavy guns rather below than above the water-line, leaving it to the 32-pounders to sweep the decks. The two XI-inch guns, and especially the after gun, played havoc with the enemy. The two ships gradually neared in their revolutions, until they were only five or six hundred yards apart. At this distance, the 100-pounder rifle of that day was no match for the heavier smooth-bores, in an engagement between wooden vessels; and the sides of the Alabama were torn out by shells and her decks covered with killed and wounded. The crew of her after pivot-gun was renewed four times during the action, and nearly every man that had served it was disabled.

At noon, after the action had been continued hotly for an hour, the Alabama ceased firing, and headed for the shore, then five miles distant. This exposed her port side, which was blown out by the XI-inch shells, and only two guns could be brought to bear, one of which had been shifted

from the other side. The ship was filling rapidly, and as the water was rising in the fireroom, Semmes set his fore-trysail and jibs, in the hope of escaping into neutral waters. The Kearsarge steered to cross his bow, and she was rapidly approaching, when Semmes saw that the end had come, and struck his flag. The Kearsarge then stopped, "uncertain whether Captain Semmes was not using some ruse," as Winslow reports, and because it was not quite clear whether the flag had been hauled down or shot away. A white flag was then displayed, and the fire of the Kearsarge ceased. Presently the Alabama renewed her fire; and the Kearsarge, in consequence, opened again and fired three or four times. All this time the white flag was flying. Semmes afterward made bitter complaints of this violation of the laws of war; but it was perfectly justified by the firing of the Alabama after she had made the signal of surrender.

It was now a little past noon, and the Alabama was settling perceptibly. A boat came alongside the Kearsarge to announce the surrender, and to ask assistance for the sinking vessel. The only two boats in the ship that were not disabled were lowered and sent to bring off the officers and crew; and the Alabama's boat was allowed to go back for the same purpose, the officer commanding the boat having given his pledge that he would return. He did not return, however; and the incident is another instance of the results which are likely to attend the pledging or paroling of prisoners during an engagement, or before possession has been taken of a vanquished enemy.

At this moment the Deerhound approached. She had been hitherto a spectator of the action. Winslow hailed the yacht, asking her to assist in bringing off the people of the Alabama. The Deerhound complied with his request, and heading for the Alabama, which was now going down rapidly,

she picked up forty-two persons, among whom were Semmes and fourteen other officers ; then, gradually edging off, she steamed across the channel to Southampton. Winslow's officers implored him to throw a shell at the *Deerhound*, when it was found that she was making off, but he refused ; and very properly, as her participation in the affair was due to his own suggestion. In making this suggestion, it appears to have been Winslow's idea that the *Deerhound*, after receiving the fugitives, would deliver them up to him as his prisoners. But he had no right to expect anything of the kind. Had the owner of the *Deerhound* taken such action, he would have incurred a heavy responsibility to the power whose officers and men he had so delivered into the hands of their enemy. On the other hand, if he had undertaken of his own motion to rescue them, either from death or from capture, he would have been connecting himself inexcusably with belligerent operations. It made no difference whether the men were in the ship, or in boats, or in the water ; wherever they were, their being there was a part and a consequence of the battle, and while the victor was on the spot, and about to reap the fruits of victory, a neutral had no right to interfere in any way whatever. Had the *Deerhound's* interference been unauthorized, it would have been the right and the duty of Winslow to have kept her off, and if the occasion required it, to have used force in so doing. But as she was doing merely what Winslow asked of her, it is hard to see how he could have been justified in firing at her, or what blame could be imputed to her owner.

The engagement lasted an hour, and in twenty minutes after the last shot was fired the *Alabama* sank out of sight. The number of casualties on board the defeated cruiser was not far from forty. Semmes allows thirty in his report, written at Southampton two days after the action ; but owing

to his hasty departure, and his separation from the rest of his crew, he could not well have known the whole number. Of the seventy prisoners taken by the Kearsarge, three were in a dying condition, and seventeen were wounded. Of the crew of the Kearsarge, three men were wounded by the bursting of a 68-pound shell on the quarter deck, one of whom afterward died. With this exception no one was hurt.

It is commonly supposed that the Alabama's guns were served by seamen-gunners from the Excellent, the gunnery-ship of the English navy. The supposition rests on a statement made soon after the action by a reporter of the London *Times*, who referred to Semmes as his authority. But Semmes denied the statement explicitly. A large number of his crew were Englishmen, several of whom had served in men-of-war, and a few were Naval Reserve men; but beyond this there seems to have been no foundation for the assertion. If it was true, it certainly did not speak well for the Excellent. Out of three hundred and seventy shot and shell fired by the Alabama, only twenty-eight struck the Kearsarge, of which one-half took effect in the hull. The rest struck the sails, rigging and boats. None of the twenty-eight did any material injury. The hammock-nettings of the Kearsarge were set on fire, but the flames were soon extinguished. One 100-pound shell exploded in the smoke-stack. Another lodged in the stern-post, but fortunately did not explode; which led Semmes to say that the fate of the battle was decided by the defects of a percussion cap. It is not an uncommon foible in beaten commanders to assign these accidental or incidental causes for their defeat, and sometimes with more or less foundation; but in the engagement of the Kearsarge and Alabama, the difference in the efficiency of the crews was too marked to admit this as in any sense an explanation. Moreover, the shell was fired in the latter part of the action,

when the Alabama was already beaten. The Kearsarge fired one hundred and seventy-three shot and shell during the fight. How many took effect it is impossible to say ; but there were few of them that failed to do some injury, and in an hour they sank the enemy.

Great capital was made by Semmes and his friends after the action by asserting that the Kearsarge was covered with "chain-plating," and, in fact, an ironclad ; and furthermore, that by concealing the fact, Captain Winslow had taken a dishonorable advantage of his adversary. The plating consisted simply of one hundred and twenty fathoms of sheet-chain placed on the vessel's side in the wake of the engine, secured up and down by marline to eyebolts in the planking, and covering a space fifty feet in length by six in depth. The device was adopted to serve as a protection for the machinery, as the coal bunkers were emptied. It would have afforded no protection against the 100-pound projectiles, if they had struck it ; but, as a matter of fact, it was struck only twice, once by a shot, and once by a shell, from a 32-pounder, which broke the chain as they struck. The protection it afforded was therefore immaterial. As to the deception, it was covered with one-inch deal boards, as a finish ; it had been put on a year before at the Azores ; and no secret had ever been made of it. But even supposing that there had been an intention to deceive, it would have been quite as legitimate as the ordinary disguises of neutral flags or merchant-rigs, which are every-day ruses ; and Semmes had never shown such a disposition to encounter ships-of-war as to make it advisable to discourage him unnecessarily. Whether there was an intention to deceive or not, the claim of Semmes that he had been deluded into fighting an ironclad under the supposition that she was a wooden vessel, will not be treated by history with great respect, in view of his well-known as-

tuteness; and in view of the fact that, had he been disposed to use them, he might have found in his chain-locker the materials for casing his own vessel in similar armor. Nevertheless, he understood perfectly the course of public sentiment in England; and when it appeared that an English-built vessel, with English guns, and a crew of Englishmen, had been thoroughly beaten and sunk in an hour by Americans in an American ship with American guns, the ironclad theory received ready acceptance, and was held to account sufficiently for that phenomenal occurrence.

In 1863, the year after the *Florida* and *Alabama* appeared, several attempts were made by the Confederacy to send additional cruisers to sea, but most of them were unsuccessful. The ironclad rams built by the Lairds for Bullock were seized by the English Government, after a three months' delay, during which the most earnest remonstrances were made by Mr. Adams, ending with a solemn declaration that to suffer the departure of the vessels was an act of war. The *Canton* or *Pampero* was also seized, and remained under seizure during the rest of the war. The *Alexandra*, whose trial was one of the celebrated cases under the Neutrality Laws, was finally released. She was subsequently libelled at Nassau, and remained there until the war was over. By this time the Government had begun to show a little more regard for its neutral obligations. Two cruisers, however, got to sea from English ports during this year. These were the *Rappahannock* and the *Georgia*.

The *Rappahannock* had a very brief career. She was formerly the *Victor*, and had been a despatch-vessel in the British Navy. The Government, finding her unserviceable, sold her on November 10, 1863, to private parties, who were acting for the Confederates. After the sale, the vessel re-

remained at Sheerness, refitting under the direction of persons connected with the Royal Dockyard. Suspicions were aroused as to her character, and inquiries were set on foot; and the vessel, to escape detention, hastily put to sea, with the workmen still in her, and with only a part of her crew, which had been enlisted by the Inspector of Machinery at the dockyard. She was put in commission in the channel, as a Confederate man-of-war, with the usual ceremonies. Proceeding to Calais, she claimed admission to the port as a ship-of-war in distress, and needing repairs. The impudence of this demand was too much for even the most sympathetic neutral; and after the Rappahannock had made some attempt to enlist more men, and to continue her preparations for sea, her operations were summarily ended by a French gunboat, which was stationed across her bow. Finding it impossible to fit her out, her commander finally concluded to abandon her.

The Georgia was somewhat more successful. She was a screw-steamer of about seven hundred tons, and was built for the Confederates on the Clyde. She was launched in January, 1863, and put to sea in April, under the name of the Japan. A Liverpool firm was employed as the intermediary to cover all the transactions connected with the vessel. One member of this firm was her ostensible owner, and she was registered in his name as a British vessel. Another member of the firm took charge of a small steamer, the Alar, which was freighted with guns, ammunition, and stores, and met the Japan, or Georgia, off Morlaix, where her preparations were completed. The crew had already been engaged, and advances had been made by the same firm before the Georgia left the Clyde. For these transactions, proceedings were afterward instituted against the guilty parties, under the Foreign Enlistment Act, and they were sentenced to pay

a fine of £50 each—a penalty which was hardly calculated to deter Her Majesty's subjects from committing violations of neutrality. Meantime the *Georgia* had escaped.

The *Georgia's* career extended over a period of one year, during which she cruised in the Middle and South Atlantic. She was at Bahia in May, 1863, and at Simon's Bay in August. Late in October she arrived at Cherbourg, where she lay for four months, part of the time undergoing repairs in the dockyard. During the month of April, 1864, she was at Bordeaux, again repairing. She had made no prizes since leaving Cherbourg, and her cruise, on the whole, had not been very successful. She was accordingly taken to Liverpool, her crew were discharged, her warlike equipment landed, and she was sold to an English ship-owner, the bill of sale being signed by Captain Bullock, the agent of the Confederate Navy Department. The transfer by a belligerent to a neutral of a vessel, even a merchant-vessel, during war, is always a subject of suspicion; much more so that of a ship-of-war. At the instance of Mr. Adams, the *Niagara*, then lying at Antwerp, under the command of Commodore Craven, came to Liverpool, ascertained that Lisbon was the destination of the *Georgia*, and immediately sailed thither to intercept her. Falling in with the converted merchantman outside of Lisbon, Craven seized her, and sent her to Boston, where she was condemned by the prize-court; and her owner never received any satisfaction for the loss of the £15,000 which he had been so rash as to pay to the Confederate Treasury.

About the time that the *Georgia* was launched, another attempt was made by the Confederates to send out a cruiser, this time from one of their own ports. For eight months the blockade-runner *Nashville* had been lying in the Great Ogeechee River, blockaded by three of our gunboats. Dur-

ing the early part of this time, she had been loaded with cotton, and it was her intention to run the blockade at the first opportunity; but the river was so well guarded, that, though constantly on the alert, she never ventured to run out. Later, she withdrew up the river, her cargo was removed, and she returned to her position fitted out as a privateer.

The Nashville's speed and other admirable qualities were well known, and it was a matter of the first importance to destroy her. Nothing but the most constant watchfulness prevented her egress. She lay in an unassailable position above Fort McAllister, a strong and well-constructed earth-work, which was so placed as to enfilade the narrow and difficult channel for a mile below. The river had been staked opposite the fort, and a line of torpedoes had been planted at intervals lower down in the channel. Above the obstructions lay the Nashville, ready to dash out at the first sign of a relaxation of the blockade.

The blockading gunboats were powerless to do more than watch, and early in 1863, the force had been increased by the addition of the monitor Montauk, under Commander Worden. On the 27th of January, and again on the 1st of February, Worden had made attacks upon the fort; but notwithstanding the vigor and accuracy of the bombardment, the character of the work was such that the injuries resulting from the attack were easily repaired. The monitor stood the test well, for, though repeatedly hit, she received little damage. Her progress up the river was checked, not by the battery, but by the obstructions; and the fort, though incapable of making a serious impression on the vessel, could prevent the destruction of the barrier. When the Monitor advanced, the Nashville found a refuge up the river, where she was out of the way of any possible

harm; and the only result which the blockading force seemed able to accomplish was to prevent her from coming out.

On the evening of the 27th of February, the Nashville was observed to be in motion above the fort. Making a careful reconnoissance, Worden discovered that, in moving up the river, the steamer had grounded about twelve hundred yards above the barrier. He saw his opportunity, and resolved to make the most of it. Having decided upon the destruction of the Nashville, he made his plans with care and judgment. As it was high water at the time of her grounding, he knew that she could not get off before morning; and though an attack by daylight would expose him to the fire of the fort, he decided to wait, in the conviction that the steamer was in his power, and that the light was as great a necessity to him as it could be to his enemy.

At daylight the next morning, the Montauk moved up to the barrier, followed at a distance by the three gunboats. Between the monitor and her antagonist lay a point of swampy land, which formed the sharp bend in the river below which the obstructions had been placed. Planting himself directly under the fire of Fort McAllister, to which he made no attempt to reply, Worden opened deliberately upon the Nashville, whose upper works only were visible across the swamp, until he had determined the range with accuracy. Dropping his XI-inch and XV-inch shells with fatal precision upon the vessel, he could watch the explosion of shell after shell on her decks; and in a few minutes she was in flames.

A thick fog now settled down, and shut out the combatants from view. The Montauk continued her fire at intervals, keeping her guns at the same direction and elevation; and a sharp lookout was kept for boarding-parties, which

might have taken advantage of the weather to come off from the fort. No attempt was made, however; and when the fog lifted, the Nashville was on fire forward, aft, and amidships. Presently her pivot gun exploded with the heat; next the smoke-stack toppled over; and finally, about one hour after the attack had begun, the magazine blew up, leaving nothing of the vessel but the smoking fragments of her hull.

To the Montauk, the battle had been no more than an hour's target practice of a winter morning. The gunners of Fort McAllister, either unprepared or demoralized, made bad work of it, and struck the ironclad only five times, doing no damage. The gunboats, remaining at a considerable distance down the river, though near enough to fire with effect at the fort, were not injured in the least. After the destruction of the Nashville, the Montauk dropped down the river. On her way she struck and exploded a torpedo, causing a serious leak, but Worden kept on until safely out of range of the fort. The monitor was then run upon a mud flat, which stopped the leak effectually until the injury could be repaired. This was the only casualty in the action—an action which in its neatness and finish left nothing to be desired.

The last of the commerce-destroyers was the Sea King, or Shenandoah. This vessel was a full-rigged ship with auxiliary steam power, of seven hundred and ninety tons, built on the Clyde, and employed in the East India trade. She was a very fast ship, a twenty-four hours' run of three hundred and twenty miles being no uncommon thing with her. She cleared from London for Bombay October 8, 1864, her Captain, Corbett, having a power of sale from the owner to dispose of her at any time within six months. She had on board a large supply of coal and provisions; but she was not

altered or equipped for war purposes, and she carried no armament except two 12-pounders, which had been on board when she was originally purchased.

On the same day, the steamer *Laurel* left Liverpool, having cleared for Nassau, with several Confederate naval officers, and a cargo of cases marked "machinery," but containing guns with their carriages and equipments. Making her way to Funchal, Madeira, she met the *Sea King*. The two vessels then proceeded to Desertas, a barren island in the neighborhood, where the *Sea King* received her armament and stores, and was transferred by Corbett to Captain Waddell, of the Confederate navy, her future commander. Waddell put her in commission, under the name of the *Shenandoah*, and she started on her cruise.

The plan of the cruise of the *Shenandoah* was based upon the movements of the Pacific whaling fleet. A portion of this fleet habitually cruised in the vicinity of the Caroline Islands for sperm whales, going north in spring. It passed the Bonins and along the coast of Japan, to the Sea of Ochotsk, where it cruised for right whale. Thence it proceeded to Behring Strait and the Arctic Ocean. On its return, it refreshed at the Sandwich Islands, generally arriving there in October or November. The plan adopted for the *Shenandoah* was to leave the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope about the 1st of January for Australia, arriving about the middle of February; thence after a short stay, to proceed north through the Carolines; and after spending some time in the route of the China-bound clippers, to enter the Ochotsk, and make the round of Behring Strait. Upon her return, she was to take up a position a little to the northward of the Sandwich Islands, to intercept such of the fleet as might have escaped.

This elaborate plan was devised by Commander Brooke at

Richmond, and was the direct result of that officer's experience in 1855, when serving with the North Pacific Exploring Expedition. It was sent by the Confederate Secretary of the Navy to Bullock, who had recently obtained control of the *Sea King*, and who was considering what disposition should be made of her. Bullock immediately acted upon it. As the commerce of the United States had been thinned out in the cruising grounds of the *Alabama* and the other commerce-destroyers, it was desirable to seek a new field of operations; and the Richmond plan seemed to answer the purpose.

In pursuance of this plan, after cruising for three months in the Atlantic, and taking several prizes, the *Shenandoah* proceeded to Tristan d'Acunha, where the crews of the captured vessels were landed. From this point she went to Melbourne, where she remained nearly a month. She was allowed to make extensive repairs in her machinery, or at least, repairs that took a considerable time, and she took on board three hundred tons of coal from a vessel sent from Liverpool for the purpose. Having left Madeira short of her complement, she enlisted forty-three men at Melbourne, who were taken on board as the vessel was on the point of sailing.

Leaving Melbourne on the 18th of February, 1865, the *Shenandoah* proceeded under sail to her proposed cruising ground in the neighborhood of Behring Strait. Here she captured and burned a large number of whalers. The capture and destruction of prizes was continued until the 28th of June, when it came to an end, on account of information received by Waddell, that the Confederate Government had ceased to exist. Waddell then brought his vessel to Liverpool, and surrendered her to the British Government.

The efforts of the Confederate agents to obtain ships-of-

war in France were defeated by the timely interference of the French Government. Six vessels of a formidable character were built, but only one, the *Stonewall*, found its way into the hands of the Confederates, and this one only toward the close of the war. Proceeding to Ferrol in March, 1865, she fell in with the frigate *Niagara* and the sloop-of-war *Sacramento*, under Commodore Craven, who took up a position in the adjoining port of Coruña. The *Stonewall* was a ram with armored sides (four or five inches), a 300-pounder rifled Armstrong gun in the casemated bow, and a fixed turret aft containing two rifled 70-pounders. The *Niagara* carried ten 150-pounder Parrott rifles, and the *Sacramento* a miscellaneous armament, in which two XI-inch and two IX-inch guns, and one 60-pounder, were the principal pieces. The *Stonewall* moved out before the harbor of Coruña, making various demonstrations calculated to provoke an encounter; but the two vessels refrained from attacking her, upon the ground that an engagement would result disastrously.

It is only necessary to make one comment on this affair. The *Stonewall* was truly an ugly antagonist. It is the opinion of many professional men that, properly handled, she could have sunk the two American vessels; and as far as probabilities were concerned, the chances might be said to lie with the ram. It may, however, be seriously questioned whether operations which are based exclusively upon nice calculations of the risk to be run in engaging an enemy are likely to be fruitful of great results.

The *Stonewall* proceeded to Lisbon, and thence to Havana, where she was surrendered to the United States by the Spanish Government, the war having terminated. She was subsequently sold to Japan.

Among all the developments in naval warfare that were

brought about between 1861 and 1865, the art of commerce-destroying, as systematized and applied by Semmes, will not be reckoned the least important. In saying this, it must be understood that reference is made, not to its ethical, but to its military aspect. As a mode of carrying on hostilities it is neither chivalrous nor romantic, nor is it that which a naval officer of the highest type would perhaps most desire to engage in ; but it fulfils, in an extraordinary degree, the main object of modern war, that of crippling an adversary.

As war in our days has lost much of its brutality, so it has largely lost the element of chivalry ; it has become scientific, stern, bloody, and business-like. The Alabama's mode of warfare, however, combined the greatest effect with the least bloodshed, and, it may be added, with the least outlay of men and money ; and its success has stimulated efforts in the great navies of the world, which will doubtless some day result in similar enterprises. The name of the Alabama, like that of the Monitor, has become a generic term ; and future Alabamas will regard the cruise of Semmes's vessel as the starting-point in all their operations.

Commerce-destroying had been practised on a considerable scale in earlier wars ; but the introduction of fast steamers enabled Semmes to carry his operations to a point of perfection that had never before been attained. His preliminary cruise in the Sumter showed him the possibilities and the limitations of this species of warfare ; and he entered upon the cruise of the Alabama with a well-considered plan of operations. He began with a careful study of the ocean highways of commerce ; and these determined the locality of his successive cruising-grounds. It is upon this discovery of strategic points that his patent chiefly rests. He calculated nicely the time required for news of his presence to

reach the United States, and before a ship could be sent after him, he had moved to a new scene of operations. The period which he generally allowed himself in any one quarter was about two months. At the end of this time he was on his way to another cruising-ground; and unless his movements could be foreseen, he was tolerably safe from pursuit. He passed his first two months in the North Atlantic. His next field was the West Indies. On each of these stations he found a large number of unprotected merchant-vessels. After leaving the West Indies, he posted himself near the equator, in the track of South American commerce. The waters over which this commerce passes lie within a belt not more than one hundred miles wide. The Alabama occupied this belt. Next she passed two months on the coast of Brazil. Thence she went to the Cape, near which the whole commerce of the Indian Ocean must pass. At the Cape again she remained about two months; but American shipmasters had by this time become cautious, and they gave the African coast a wide berth. From the Cape Semmes went to the Straits of Sunda, the gateway of the China Sea. Here he remained two months, and was again successful.

During all this period the Alabama was kept constantly moving. The only delays were for repairs and coal. The latter was furnished at first by coaling-vessels sent to appointed rendezvous. Later, the ship depended upon prizes, and upon supplies in neutral ports, which were never grudged. When a long cruise made repairs or rest a necessity, an anchorage was selected, which from its remoteness and obscurity, and from its slight dependence upon a civilized power, gave an opportunity to refit at leisure and in security. The Arcas, Fernando de Noronha, Angra Pequena, and Pulo Condore were successively utilized in this way.

When more extensive repairs were required, Semmes put boldly into a neutral port, and his ingenuity generally supplied the authorities with the points that were needed to justify them in extending to him every facility.

It is common to speak of the Alabama and the other Confederate cruisers as privateers. It is hard to find a suitable designation for them, but privateers they certainly were not. The essence of a privateer lies in its private ownership; its officers are persons in private employment; and the authority under which it acts is a letter-of-marque. To call the cruisers pirates is merely to make use of invective. Most of them answered all the legal requirements of ships-of-war; they were owned by the Government, and they were commanded by naval officers acting under a genuine commission. Some of them were put in commission at sea or in foreign waters, and never saw the country of their adoption; but their commission could not thereby be invalidated. There is no rule of law which prescribes the place where a Government shall commission its ships, or which requires the ceremony to take place, like the sessions of prize-courts, within the belligerent territory.

Assuming that the commissioned vessels of the Confederates were *prima facie* ships-of-war, the question arises whether they were entitled to the privileges accorded to such vessels by the usage of nations. They were acting for a Government whose belligerency had been recognized, though no recognition had been accorded to the state which it was seeking to establish. This fact might modify somewhat the view in which the vessels were regarded by foreign states, in that the latter could maintain no official relations with the insurgent Government, and were therefore deprived of the ordinary method of redress, if the vessels should commit an offence against their sovereignty. But

the method of obtaining redress by negotiation is by no means the only way of dealing with offending ships-of-war in foreign waters. They may be summarily ordered to depart; they may be forbidden to enter; and, finally, if they assail in any way the local sovereignty, or if they refuse to comply with an order for their departure or their exclusion, force may be used against them. There is, and there can be, no rule of law, which compels a government to remain passive while its laws are openly violated, simply because of the sanctity which is supposed to surround a public vessel; nor, when a neutral government has allowed its neutrality to be infringed by the cruisers of one belligerent, can it justify itself to the other by putting forward such a plea. With stronger reason, a ship-of-war whose very existence is a consequence of evasions or infringements of the local law may be denied the ordinary immunities. When, therefore, the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, vessels that had been allowed to go to sea from English ports in violation of English neutrality, at a subsequent period entered ports of the same Power, while engaged in their belligerent enterprises, the Government could not excuse its inaction on the ground of respect for the Confederate commission; and, by refusing either to exclude or to detain the cruisers, it added to the wrong which it had already committed.

In view of the respect which civilized states exact for their public vessels, it is desirable that every safeguard should be employed by the State itself to protect this character from abuse. The Confederate Government showed considerable laxity in this respect. If it had not been incapable of negotiation, and if the neutral powers had pursued the ordinary policy of neutrals, it would doubtless have received some emphatic remonstrances on the subject. It procured cruisers abroad through "shifts and strata-

gems,"¹ cleared them under the names of fictitious owners, or brought them out without a clearance, took formal possession of them on the high seas, though they were ostensibly and according to their papers foreign vessels, and put them in commission as ships-of-war. It procured other vessels abroad, not intended for war purposes, which it owned and controlled, and in some cases officered from its navy, and which it employed in trade—that is, as blockade-runners. These vessels, owned, controlled, and officered by the Confederate Government, sailed sometimes under the British flag, and with British papers, and sometimes with those of the Government to which they belonged. They were fitted out, now as ships-of-war, now as merchant vessels, according as the one character or the other would best satisfy the exigency of the moment, and the demands of the local authorities in foreign ports.

A few of the prominent cases will serve to show the nature of these arrangements. The *Japan* or *Georgia* left the Clyde, registered in the name of a British subject as a British vessel, and she remained, for nearly three months, still registered in the name of her ostensible owner, though she was all that time engaged in hostilities against the United States. A year later she returned to Liverpool and was dismantled. Whether she was then a ship-of-war or a merchant vessel does not appear. She was soon after sold to an English subject, the bill of sale being signed by Bullock, just as the *Sumter* had been sold at Gibraltar, when Semmes found that he could not take her out to sea.

The *Rappahannock* left Sheerness in haste as a merchant-vessel, with her workmen still in her, assumed a public character in the run across the channel, and sought admis-

¹ Earl Russell's letter of February 12, 1865.

sion at Calais as a ship-of-war in distress. The Tuscaloosa, a prize of the Alabama, entered the harbor at the Cape with a prize crew, and with her captured cargo, which she hoped to sell, still on board, and claimed the privileges of a ship-of-war, because her captor chose so to designate her; and after being accorded these privileges, she left the harbor to carry her wool to Angra Pequena, where it was actually sold. A British Vice-Admiralty court could obtain no evidence at Nassau that the Florida, an exact copy of the gun-vessels of the English navy, was other than a merchantman, owned by a British firm, and in a week after her release she was at sea as a Confederate ship-of-war. Toward the close of the war blockade-runners were hastily converted into cruisers, and as hastily changed back to blockade-runners, until the Confederate navy list must have been a hopeless muddle. The blockade-runner Edith suddenly appeared out of Wilmington one night in October, 1864, under the character and designation of the "C. S. Steamer Chickamauga," armed with a 64-pounder and a 32-pounder, and, after seizing and destroying four or five unfortunate coasters, returned to port in three weeks, to resume her former state and occupation. It is hard to see what purpose could be served by belligerent operations of such a character, at this stage of the conflict, and it shows the desperate straits to which the Confederate Government was put toward the end in attempting to keep up the semblance of a naval war.

But the vessel which had the most varied career was the Tallahassee. She was originally called the Atlanta, and under that name she arrived at Bermuda in the spring of 1864. She made two trips to Wilmington as a blockade-runner. She was then converted into a cruiser, under the name of the Tallahassee, and sailed from Wilmington early in August. Her course was shaped for Halifax, where she

arrived on the 19th, after having destroyed several vessels. Owing to the vigilance of the authorities, who for once were on the alert to prevent infringements of the neutrality regulations, she was unable to accomplish all that she wanted in getting repairs and coal, and on the 26th, she returned to Wilmington. In November she made another short cruise, this time under the name of the *Olustee*,¹ during which she took a few prizes. With this cruise her belligerent career came to an end. Her battery was removed, and her officers and crew were detached. A bill of sale was drawn up, the ostensible purchaser being the navy agent at Wilmington; a register was issued, a crew engaged, a cargo of cotton shipped, and invoices and bills of lading made out in the prescribed form. She received the name of the *Chameleon*, which must have been a piece of pleasantry on the part of whoever may have been considered as her owner. She left Wilmington in December, under the command of Captain Wilkinson, of the Confederate navy, under orders from the Navy Department, and her object was to obtain a supply of provisions at Bermuda, of which the army was in dire need. Upon her arrival the Lieutenant-Governor was somewhat exercised as to her character, but finally decided that she was not a man-of-war, having been "sold to a private merchant," to borrow the phrase of the British counter-case at Geneva. According to Wilkinson, the vessel had been "so thoroughly whitewashed" that the authorities could find nothing to lay hold of. After loading her cargo, she steered for Wilmington, but Fort Fisher had now fallen, and she was compelled to put back. Charleston was tried with no better success; and after landing her provisions at Nassau, the

¹ According to the statement in the case of the *United States* at Geneva, "it is not quite clear whether she made two trips, one under each name, or whether the name was changed in one trip."

Chameleon was taken to Liverpool, and delivered to Fraser, Trenholm & Co., the Confederate agents. She was subsequently seized by the British Government, and ultimately surrendered to the United States.

A great deal of uncalled-for abuse has been heaped upon the South for the work of the Confederate cruisers, and their mode of warfare has been repeatedly denounced as barbarous and piratical in official and unofficial publications. But neither the privateers, like the *Petrel* and the *Savannah*, nor the commissioned cruisers, like the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, were guilty of any practices which, as against their enemies, were contrary to the laws of war. The expediency of enforcing the right of maritime capture has been much discussed during the last hundred years, and has often been questioned on humanitarian grounds. It is not proposed to consider that question here. For the present purpose, it is sufficient that the right to capture an enemy's private property at sea is fully recognized by the law and practice of nations to-day. All that is necessary is to establish the enemy ownership, and this being done, the prize-courts of every country in the world will decree confiscation. Whether the prize is destroyed at sea, or is brought into a prize-court and condemned, can make no possible difference to the owner, if the owner is clearly an enemy. The officer making the capture is responsible to his Government, and as the proceeds of the prize usually go in part to the State, the officer's Government may and doubtless will require him to bring in his prize, if possible, for adjudication. But this is a matter purely of internal discipline, a question between the State and its officers. So also, if by accident or intention neutral property is captured and destroyed, a question arises between the captor's government and that of the neutral, but it is a question with which the other belligerent has nothing to do.

So much for the law on the subject. As for the practice, it is usual for governments to require their officers to give sufficient reason why a prize is not brought in. Either the unseaworthiness of the prize, or the want of men to navigate her, would manifestly be a sufficient reason. In the absence of any preventing cause, the prize should be brought to a port of adjudication; and, if that is impossible, to the nearest neutral port that will admit it. But during the war, the ports of the Confederates were under blockade, and the rule was generally adopted by neutrals of excluding the prizes of both belligerents. Nothing then remained but to destroy the captured vessel at sea. To have done otherwise would have been to abandon the right of maritime capture.

The practice of destroying prizes, however, even when it is possible to send them in, is no new thing in maritime warfare, especially in the maritime warfare of the United States. The cruise of the *Argus* in 1813 was precisely parallel to those of the *Alabama* and *Florida*; and the instructions of the Navy Department to commanding officers during the war of 1812 were to "destroy all you capture, unless in some extraordinary cases that clearly warrant an exception." To take a later instance, in a decision in the High Court of Admiralty during the Crimean War, Dr. Lushington said, "It may be justifiable, or even praiseworthy in the captors to destroy an enemy's vessel. Indeed, the bringing into adjudication at all of an enemy's vessel is not called for by any respect to the rights of the enemy proprietor, where there is no neutral property on board." The French, in at least two cases in the war of 1870, burned prizes at sea, because it was inconvenient to send prize crews on board; and from more recent events it is clear that other Governments, in case of war with a commercial power, will deem themselves fortunate if they can rival the achievements of the Confederate commerce-destroyers.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION.

As it was a part of the object of this book to deal with the condition of the navy at the outbreak of the war and with the preparations made by the Government to carry it on, it will not be out of place to dwell for a moment upon certain conclusions which may be drawn from a consideration of this branch of the subject. As conclusions by a non-professional observer, they are submitted with hesitation and diffidence ; and as they carry with them no weight of authority, they may be taken simply at their own worth.

A military force, whether intended to operate on land or at sea, exists primarily for purposes of war. Cruising on foreign stations during peace, in these days when piracy has disappeared, is not an occupation calculated to exercise fully its powers. Ships-of-war are no doubt of use from time to time at various points, but their usefulness is not so great that a government whose foreign relations are generally amicable would keep up a large establishment for this object alone. Their real purpose is to become the national defence in time of war. As with the ships, so with the officers ; it is in war, not in peace, that the fruit of their labors is to be gathered.

So far, doubtless, everybody is agreed ; in fact, what has been said is little more than a truism. But the logical inference drawn from the premises is far from commanding

universal assent, and still farther from obtaining recognition in practice. The inference is this : that the primary object for a navy at all times is to maintain itself, in all its branches, matériel, personnel, and organization, in the most perfect state that is possible of readiness and efficiency for war. This should be the first and ever-present consideration with those who enact, who administer, and who execute measures of naval policy ; the ability to place the whole establishment in the condition of active warlike operation, as instantaneously and as smoothly as an engineer starts his machine.

In 1861, the navy was by no means in a condition of readiness for war, although war was the purpose for which it existed. In matériel, it had a few ships suitable for cruising purposes, and it had superior ordnance ; but half the fleet was antiquated, and the rest was displaying the flag on distant stations. As to the personnel, it is useless to deny the fact that the list was heavily weighted by the old officers at the head, who had reached their position, not because of merit, but because of the date when they happened to enter the service ; that the middle of the list was suffering from long stagnation, and from the absence of any inducement to effort ; and finally, that the young men, who were to bear the brunt of the work, were altogether too few for the needs of the service. It is commonly said that the navy was on a peace footing ; but if that was the case, a complete and well-defined provision should have been made for expansion. To speak of a "peace footing" implies that a "war footing" is something different ; and no naval establishment can consider itself prepared for war that has not made beforehand all the arrangements necessary to pass at once from one to the other.

Conceding the necessity of a peace footing for personnel

and matériel, on the score of expense, there is no necessity for such a thing as a peace footing for organization. The organization of a military or naval establishment is fixed primarily with a view to efficiency in war, and only such slight modifications are introduced in time of peace as are indispensable. So far from this being the case in 1861, the whole administration was arranged on an exactly opposite basis. It was about as unfitted for the conduct of a war as it was possible to be. The organization was that of five bureaus, independent of each other, and only united by a common subordination to the Head of the Department. Now, whatever merits the system of nearly independent bureaus may have in time of peace, it is entirely inadequate as an organization for carrying on war. The direction of military or naval operations must be centralized, not only in the person of the Departmental head, but in his responsible professional advisers; and to impose this heavy burden upon Chiefs of Bureaus, whose business is with certain specific branches of administration, is to expect men to take in at the same moment the whole field of view and the minutest details of a single part. It is the essence of a good organization that every branch of it should have its own work, and should confine itself to that; and for that, and that alone, it should be held to the fullest responsibility. The province of a Bureau is to furnish a gun, or a hull, or an engine, or a crew, the best possible that can be obtained; and to devolve upon its Chief the duty of planning campaigns is only to divert him from his legitimate business, and would, in the nature of things, result disastrously both to the campaign and the bureau. The general direction of military and naval operations, if we are to accept the testimony of the highest authorities and the evidence of the most successful campaigns, is the work of men bred in the busi-

ness. It cannot be done successfully, according to the demands of modern warfare, by this or that officer picked up on the spur of the moment, or by boards of officers created as the exigency arises. It must be put in the hands of those who have spent much labor and thought in examining and fastening upon the strong and weak points of all possible enemies; who have made their office the repository of all possible information; who have, as Moltke is said to have had, the whole details of campaigns in their pigeon-holes, to be modified, month by month, as new circumstances arise; and finally, who are studying, not gunnery, nor machinery, nor construction, nor fleet-tactics alone, but the science of war, in all its bearings, as an actual, living, and, above all, as a growing science. In short, the direction of naval operations, like that of military operations, should be entrusted to a previously-trained and previously-equipped General Staff.

Now, in 1861, the navy had no general staff. Staff-work was a branch of naval science as uncultivated as the attack and defence by torpedoes; nor did it occur to the authorities at the time that a staff might be created. So they set about to find a substitute. By one of those fortunate accidents, which lead our happy-go-lucky nation to fall on its feet, when it has come unprepared upon a crisis, a man had about this time come forward, in connection with the relief-expeditions to Fort Sumter, who was fitted, as nearly as any one man could be, to take charge of the work. This man was Captain Gustavus V. Fox. It may be said in passing that an accident of this kind cannot be counted on, nor can it justify the absence of preparation, when preparation is so simple and easy—in war nothing must be left to chance. In addition to his natural attainments, which were exceptional, Fox was a man of varied experience, having passed eighteen years in the navy,

during which he had served in ships-of-war, in the Coast Survey, and in command of mail-steamers. Five years before the war he had resigned, and had engaged in business. He therefore started in his career as Assistant Secretary with a grasp of the situation, and a capacity to meet it, that could be found in few men at that time, either outside the service or in it. To say that he became Assistant Secretary does not define his position. He was anything but an Assistant Secretary. He was really the Chief of Staff; or rather he was the whole general staff in person. Of course he could not perform all the details of his work himself, and as he had not at command a previously-trained body of staff-officers, he made judicious use of the material at his disposal by the creation of temporary boards. One board was organized, composed of Captains Dupont and Davis, Major Barnard of the Engineers, and Professor Bache, to report on the coast of the enemy, its points of access and its defences. Here the exceptional character of the war led to the selection of exceptional persons to give the information necessary for intelligent operations; for, as the enemy's coast was also our own, no one could be better informed about its accessibility and defences than the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, and the engineer who had built the forts. Similarly another board, composed of Commodores Smith and Paulding, and Captain Davis again, was appointed to examine plans for ironclad vessels. The board modestly stated in its report that it approached the subject "with diffidence, having no experience and but scanty knowledge in this branch of naval architecture." It was composed of extremely able men, and their conclusions were formed under the circumstances with promptness and judgment. Yet the report of the board was only made September 16, five months after the war may be said to have begun, and six weeks after the Act of Congress

authorizing the expenditure for the purpose of building iron-clads. A properly-organized general staff in working operation would have had every plan that could be presented thoroughly examined and passed upon before Congress was even in session; and the contracts should have been ready for signature on the day after the appropriation was made. The importance of time, even in a war as loosely conducted and as long drawn out as that of the Rebellion, has no better illustration than in the case of the Monitor. Congress assembled July 5; a month later it passed the appropriation; in six weeks the board reported; three weeks afterward the contract for the Monitor was signed; and, after all this deliberation and discussion, had the Monitor's arrival in Hampton Roads been postponed by one single day, by the infinitesimal space, considering the length of preparation, of twenty-four hours, she would have found little in the shape of a fleet to need her protection.

It is a common mistake to point to our experience in 1861 to show that a navy can be prepared for action at short notice. It is supposed that, because the Government came out victorious in the end in its naval operations, without having made any preparation beforehand, it will always be safe to postpone measures looking to war until the war is upon us—the supply of a large body of trained officers, the selection of the ablest men for the higher grades, the establishment and training of a general staff, the organization of reserves, the construction of modern vessels. It is true that a partial substitute for all these requisites of an efficient force was secured before the war was over; that in 1865 there were 7,600 officers and 50,000 seamen in the service, that the ablest men had come to the front, that a Chief of Staff was found in the person of the Assistant Secretary, and that the fleet had been increased from sixty-nine vessels to six hundred

and seventy-one, two hundred and eight of which had been built or begun while hostilities were going on. Perhaps, if our next war lasts four years, and if all the sea-board cities are not destroyed during the first half-year, we may do the same again. No doubt the Administration was handicapped at the outset by its unwillingness, for reasons of public policy, to take the offensive; but even allowing for this delay, the fact remains that in the first six months—months during which, in modern wars, not only the most telling blows are struck, but the issue of the war is generally decided—all that could be done with the most strenuous efforts, and the greatest energy in the administrative head, was to collect our fragmentary resources and to discover the men who could make them available. Fortunately, we were fighting a Government that was destitute of a naval force. Had our enemy been a maritime power with a navy in the most ordinary condition of readiness, and with a competent working staff, it would have fared ill with us in the first summer. In our next war we shall probably have no such good fortune, and we shall learn to our cost the fatal result of procrastination.

It is idle to suppose, in face of the changes that mechanical science is making every year in our daily lives, that the materials of naval warfare will remain long at any given stage of development. Progress will go on, and the only way in which a naval force can be kept up which shall be equal to the barest necessities of the country is by a constant adaptation of fleets and armaments to the new demands of modern war. Objectors may say that if changes are so rapid, new constructions will shortly be superseded by newer ones. But science advances, whether Governments wish it or not; and if the navy is to be kept up at all, it must be kept up to date. New instruments of warfare can-

not be manufactured in a day ; nor can officers be expected to use them to advantage when they have had no previous opportunity to practise their use. "Our occupation," wrote Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, shortly after the war, "was formerly an instinct ; now it is a science." The mastery of a science requires study ; but while war is going on, men have little time to think, much less to study. They can only use as best they may the new tools that are put into their hands, if their government has not given them modern tools beforehand. Even admitting, though it should never be admitted for a moment, that it is too much to ask that provision should be made for keeping the material in the forefront of scientific progress, there is at least a limit to the distance which it may be allowed to fall in the rear. If we must be out of date, it is better to be four years behind the times than to be twenty years behind.

It is hard to see how the advocates of a policy of procrastination can reiterate the old arguments about the success of our naval operations in the war, to justify inaction. It was not really a naval war, for there was hardly a naval enemy. There were three or four cruisers at sea, some of which were captured or destroyed after having obliterated our commerce, and one of which, at least, never was captured. There was an extemporized fleet here and there, made up of anything that came to hand, such as drove the blockading squadron from the Head of the Passes. There was one steam-frigate that had been raised out of the water, and made in some sense a modern war vessel, which played havoc with her antiquated opponents, and for a month kept the force at Hampton Roads at bay. There were other ironclads which had been fitted out under almost every disadvantage that circumstances could create, and which had a short career at various points. In coping, not with this

force, for it could hardly be called a force, but with the simple obstruction of natural causes, the navy, as soon as it obtained any suitable ships, maintained an extensive blockade, and captured many vessels ; it occupied several points on the coast, but only three of them in the first year ; it was compelled to postpone attacking others until years had been spent in making them impregnable ; and it cruised in the dark after the commerce-destroyers, without adequate sources of intelligence or unity of direction. In the first six months, the enemy had few powerful forts, and fewer torpedoes ; his navy hardly existed ; and yet all that could be done was to effect an entrance at Hatteras Inlet, and to establish a blockade that during this period came near the suspicion of being fictitious, except at a few of the principal ports. If a navy can be built to order after a war begins, how did it happen that with unheard-of efforts there was not an adequate force afloat in September, 1861, to enter every Southern port ?

The cause did not lie in the officers. Such faults as they had were faults, not of the men, but of the system—a system which ignored the cardinal principle of naval policy, that a navy must always be maintained in a condition of readiness for instant war. Neither in its central organization, nor in the number and mode of advancement of its personnel, nor in the character of its ships, did it approach such a condition. Even the bravery, endurance, and energy of its officers, and the capacity shown in its direction during the war, in the face of extraordinary obstacles, cannot blind us to the fact that the work would have been better and more quickly done under a better system—a system which should utilize the long intervals of peace to prepare, with the utmost thoroughness, for the sudden emergency of war.

